Hypotheneous hampei invloving cultural, chemical, biological and quarantine measures and successful management of this pest below economic threshold level in infested areas.

Trade Barriers by Developed Countries.

2781. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have expressed concern over the increasing propensity towards erecting new trade barriers by the developed countries;

(b) if so, whether the Government proposes to formulate new strategy to face the increasing trade barriers by the developed countries; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) Our strategy for encouraging other countries to remove trade barriers consist of the following elements:

(i) The procedure of dispute settlement through the World Trade Organisation;

(ii) Bilateral contacts, especially through the mechanism of Joint Commissions;

(iii) Diplomatic activity through our .

Missions abroad;

(iv) Raising the issues in the appropriate WTO Committees.

Classification of Rice into Two Categories

2782. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to reclassify the non-basmati rice into two categories in place of the existing single category;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the advantages of the new classification?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) No, Sir. As per the existing norms of classification of rice for Central Pool procurement, non scented (non-basmati) varieties of rice are already classified in two groups viz; Grade 'A' and common.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Rubber and Tea Cultivation in Assam

2783. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated target of production, total area coverage of rubber and tea cultivation in the State of Assam during the Ninth Plan;

(b) the total annual production of tea and rubber in Assam during last five years and its percent contribution to the national exports; and

(c) the details of the package of incentives being provided by the Tea Board to large, medium and small tea growers alongwith criteria for such incentives?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) The estimated target of production of Tea in the State of Assam by the terminal year of Ninth Plan period is 500 Million kgs. The production of rubber for Assam at the end of IX Five Year Plan is estimated at 5,000 tonnes. The estimated target of total area coverage of tea cultivation and planting of rubber in Assam during the Ninth Plan period is 20,000 ha. and 3500 ha. respectively.

(b) The total annual production of tea and rubber in Assam during last five years is given below:—

Tea

Year	Production (M.Kgs.)
1993	410.43
1994	400.73
1995	402.62
1996	424.86(Estimated)
1997	425.43(Estimatcd)

Rubber

Year	Production (Tonnes)
1993-94	300
1994-95	320
1995-96	380
1996-97	1250
1997-98	2000(Provisional)

Teas are exported mainly in blended form either in bulk or in packet. In the process, origin of Tea is lost at the time of blending and hence export of Tea by origin of production cahnot be identified. As such state-wise export statistics are not maintained. The export of Natural Rubber from India is insignificant.

(c) Tea Board provides financial support to the tea industry for undertaking the following activities:—

(a) Extension of tea area in the traditional tea growing regions.

(b) Uprooting and replanting/ replacement of old and uneconomic sections of tea.

(c) Rejuvenation Pruning and Consolidation through infilling.

(d) Improving irrigation and Drainage conditions.

(e) Development of small tea gardens.

(f) Extension of tea cultivation in the non-traditional areas.

(g) Stepping up of Research and Development Activities.

(h) Market Development and Export promotion.

(i) Augmenting processing capacity and modernizationoftheprocessingfactories.

Assistance under various developmental schemes covering the above activities is provided to all producers registered with the Tea Board. There are also special schemes applicable only to small growers having holding area upto 10.12 ha.

Announcement of a New Exim Policy

2784. DR. B.B. DUTTA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has announced a new Exim Policy;

(b) if so, what are the highlights of the policy;

(c) what are our commitments to World Trade Organisation;

(d) the manner in which the new policy fulfils these commitments;

(e) whether we have defaulted on several commitments to WTO; and

(f) if so, what are these areas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMA KRISHNA HEGDE): (a) and (b) The Government has brought out a revised edition of the Exim Policy (1997—2002) incorporating amendments upto on 13th April, 1998. Major changes made in the Exim Policy are as follows:

1. Threshold limit for EPCG zero duty » scheme for Electronics,- Textiles, Leather, Gems & Jewellery, Sports goods and Food Processing sectors has been brought down from Rs. 20 Crore to Rs. 1 Crore. For Agricultural and Allied sectors, this limit under zero duty has been brought down from Rs. 5 Crore to Rs. 1 Crore.

2. Provision has been made in the EXIM Policy to enable the setting up of Private Bonded Warehouses which